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ABSTRACT

As a botanist uses specific, non-judgmental descriptions that are part of a conceptual framework to help see different varieties and characteristics of plants, so teachers can see more clearly what they do if they describe rather than judge what is done. If the purpose of using a framework or model to discuss lesson presentations and classroom communication is to discover the rules persons follow, a model is needed for teachers to follow in observing tape-recordings of their own lessons. The model described here has five characteristics: (1) the source and target of communication; (2) the purpose; (3) the mediums used to communicate content, namely, linguistic, non-linguistic, para-linguistic, and silence; (4) six ways in which mediums are used, namely, to attend, characterize, present, relate, represent, or set; and (5) content categorized as life, procedure and study. A multidimensional coding system such as this one generates many differences in the descriptions of communication. Using it in conjunction with videotape observation and self-critique accomplishes its major purpose, simply to describe what is. Rules as well as alternative patterns will then readily suggest themselves. Tables illustrate the model and further reference material is provided in the appendices. (AMH)

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What kind of a flower is that?--An alternative model for discussing lessons

As a botanist uses specific, non-judgmental descriptions that are part of a conceptual framework to help see different varieties and characteristics of plants and other parts of the plant kingdom, so we teachers can see more clearly what we do if we describe what we do rather than judge what we do. The purpose of this presentation is to make a plea, and provide a rationale and a means so we can initiate and engage in the process of examining our own teaching on our own, without the benefit of supervisors or other outside experts.

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Background

One is as likely to hear "a rose" as "beautiful" in response to "What kind of a flower is that?". But in my experience, when we substitute lesson for flower in the question, one is more likely to hear "beautiful" or some other judgment rather than a name or a description, especially if the person responding is a supervisor. Teachers, too, are more likely to judge their lessons than describe them in my experience, though.

Since judgments are so widespread--everyone seems to have mastered this model of discussing lessons--I think we need an alternate model for discussing lessons, one that emphasizes description. Not only are judgments widespread, but they also obscure what actually happens because they are based on our own preconceived notions of what is good and bad. Judgments are also likely to inhibit change because as soon as we say what we have done is good or effective we are likely to become invested in it. And as soon as we say something is bad we are likely to avoid it. While a botanist may like some plants more than others, in the work of learning about the plant kingdom, discussions are governed by a conceptual framework and a set of operationally defined terms rather than by judgments based on preconceived notions. By using a framework and set of terms in our discussions of lessons, we will be able to be as precise about what we do as the botanist is about many aspects of the plant kingdom, and like the botanist, we will be free to explore, uninhibited by preconceived notions.

At this point, I must hasten to say that just as a botanist uses sets of terms to describe so generalizations can be made and rules discovered, so in the first instance, I think the purpose of discussing lessons using a framework is to discover rules we follow, not to improve lessons. The idea that rules--unconscious conventions--control much of what we do is central to my thinking and one reason I think it is so vital for us all to concentrate on description rather than judgment. I believe that both in discussions of lessons and in lessons, most of what we do we do not because we are either clever or stupid but rather because invisible rules control most of what we do. We may be amused by elaborate mating rituals animals perform, but when we recall that we tend to say "Now" each time we shift a topic in class and we glance towards the direction a bus is coming from when waiting for a bus, as if glancing will make the bus come faster,

we realize that invisible, unconscious rules govern much of what we do. And we further realize that until we see the rules we cannot substitute others for them. (Eibl-Eifesfeltdt, 1974)

Before I describe the system I and others have found useful in describing lessons, let me say that though the system can be used by anyone, my dream is that teachers will use it on their own to discuss their own teaching, without the benefit of supervisors or other outsiders. While supervisors that describe rather than judge may be a refreshing change from supervisors that judge, a supervisor is still a supervisor. Until teachers tape record, transcribe and describe their own lessons, discover the rules they follow, and generate alternatives on their own, all the time suspending judgments, they cannot be free. (Cogan,1973; Gallwey,1974)

Characteristics of observation system

Introduction

Now that I have given a brief background describing the need for description, I want to tell you some characteristics of the observation system I use in describing lessons. Along with this, I will state a few ways I have seen the system used in discussions of lessons.

Though I have been emphasizing that the system is useful for discussing lessons, it is important for you to know that I have developed the system so that it can be used to observe and describe communications both in teaching and non-teaching settings. Afterall, we read, listen, speak and write in all settings, not just in classes. To compare the way we read outside of class--usually with a drink in hand, in an easy chair and with background music--with the way we read inside of class--sitting upright in a hard chair in absolute silence--is vital if we are to learn the rules we follow. How can we learn except through contrasts?

It is also important to know that though I dream that teachers will make extensive use of the observation system, it can also be used for systematic and sustained research by those who have more time than teachers for very detailed analyses of communications. Said another way, the instrument is designed to describe communications specifically

in a general way that is useful for those without a great deal of time and at the same time is designed to be used by those who want to describe in specific terms very small details of communications and who have the time to do just this because they are paid to do it--researchers, for example.

Source and Target of Communication

Since the instrument is designed to meet so many goals it is of course multi-dimensional. It contains categories for five separate characteristics of communications. The first characteristic, the obvious one that almost all systems describe, is the source of communication: who or what is communicating to whom? Often teacher and students are considered as sources of communications. But I have another category to account for books, noises and other sources of communications: Other. An alarm on a clock I'd code other, for example.

Because my system is designed for use both in and out of teaching settings, the word teacher does not refer only to a person who's paid to teach but to anyone who is in charge or who takes control. When I go to a hotel and I ask for directions from the clerk, he assumes the role of teacher. If I just talked to the clerk about the weather, then we are communicating as peers and I would code both of us student. So student means peer as well as a person in the role of a student.

Unit of Analysis

The second thing I code, really what I code along with the source and target of communication, is the purpose of the communication. I use Arno Bellack's purposes: structuring, soliciting, responding and reacting.(Bellack, 1966)

These four move types determine the unit of analysis as well. Whenever the purpose of a communication changes, another unit starts. Structuring and soliciting, as the words suggest, are initiatory moves and responding and reacting are reflexive moves. Communications that set the stage for subsequent communications or review what has occurred but do not require any responses are coded structuring moves. The captain's announcements on a plane are one example and the introductory notes in a concert program or playbill are another.

Asking questions, giving commands or requesting either actions or any other types of responses constitute soliciting. They are different from structuring moves because solicits require responses. Providing answers to questions, complying with requests or commands are all considered responses. Any communications that do not fit in any of these three categories and are reflexive in nature are considered reacting moves.

If you code the source and target and move type of the communications in Excerpt 1 Green Cakes, the meaning of the move types and the great amount of information revealed by the coding of just these two characteristics of communications will become clearer. Compare your coding with mine, printed below the excerpt.

Excerpt 1 Green Cakes

Setting The living room of an apartment. Two four-year-old boys are sitting on the floor next to a tea table on which they have just been playing a game. After the game the following exchange takes place.

1. Joseph: What you do at Janie's party?
2. Rodney: (tugging at the edge of his short pants as he speaks) She had a big cake.
3. Joseph: What kind?
4. Rodney: (spreading his arms widely) A big one.

Excerpt 1, Green Cakes, continued

5. Joseph: What kind of a big one?

6. Rodney: A real big one. (said emphatically)

7. Joseph: (a bit perplexed) What color were it?

8. Rodney: (touching his lips with wandering fingertips)

9. What color were it?

10. Green.

11. Joseph: (waving his hand disdainfully)

12. Aw, you dumb.

13. They ain't no green cakes.

Key: 1. t to s sol; 2. s to t res; 3. t to s sol; 4. s to t res; 5 t to s sol; 6. s to t res; 7. t to s sol;8&9 s_1 to s_1 and t rea (the subscript shows the source and target of the communication at one level are the same person); 10 s to t res; 11-13 t to s rea.

Though this dialogue took place outside of a classroom, there are elements in it that are parallel to the usual pattern in some classrooms. One person is assuming the role of a teacher, asking questions and providing feedback. The other is being treated like a student. Just as any setting can become a teaching setting, as Excerpt 1 illustrates, so all settings in classrooms are not necessarily teaching settings as Excerpt 2 Before class illustrates. Code the sources and targets of communications and move types in Excerpt 2 and compare your coding with mine, printed below the excerpt.

Excerpt 2 Before Class

Setting Language classroom before the teacher arrives. One student brought some nuts which he and another student are beginning to eat.

1. (nuts are in a bag on a desk and students take the nuts) 1.____ ____
2. Carlos: These are great. 2.____ ____
3. Yoko: Yeah. But are they oily. 3.____ ____
4. Carlos: They're fattening too. I'm already overweight and really don't need them. 4.____ ____
5. Yoko: I like these as well as two legged nuts! I like them both. 5.____ ____
6. Carlos: I like peanuts better than these. 6.____ ____
7. Yoko: My father likes them better too. They go better with beer. 7.____ ____

Key: 1. other and students str; 2. s_1 to s_2 rea; 3. s_2 to s_1 rea; 4. s_1 to s_2 rea; 5. s_2 to s_1 rea; 6. s_1 to s_2 rea; 7. s_2 to s_1 rea.

Just looking at the source and target of communication and the move types can aid in discovering some rules and generating some alternative sequences of moves. For example, one obvious alternative that Excerpt 1 Green Cakes illustrates is students can serve in the role of teachers. At a very early age students solicit and react. But though they can communicate with these purposes, the target language obviously presents new challenges. Such teaching does force the use of a great many solicits and reactions. These two types of communications are rare for students in their roles as students because the most frequent moves of students is, of course, responding.

Excerpt 2 Before class suggests that if structuring is communicated by other — in this case nuts — a series of peer to peer reactions is likely to follow. After a concert — another structuring move that would be coded other — one often hears a series of reactions too. As more and more similar patterns or sequences are noted it is possible to make generalizations about the likelihood of certain sequences. These generalizations are descriptions of rules.

Mediums used

Though the move is the basic unit of analysis I use, it is not the only unit I describe. Another unit I use is a message. A move can have from one to any number of messages. The number of messages in a move is determined by the three other characteristics of communications I note: the mediums used to communicate, the way the mediums are used and the content the mediums communicate. Each medium used in more than one way or that communicates more than one area of content signals a separate message.

It might seem strange to describe the mediums in an observation system designed in the first instance for language classes. And I realize that the term medium itself is a bit strange as well. But in fact mediums other than language are very central to communication even in language class. Remember, the nuts in Excerpt 2 set the stage for the students' comments. And without the green cake in Excerpt 1, Rodney would not have had anything to talk about.

I place mediums in one of three major categories. One is linguistic -- the print in front of you, words you hear others say. Another is non-linguistic, like a picture or a nut or noise or music. Gestures and tone of voice constitute the third one, which I call para-linguistic. Another medium I note is the absence of the others or simply time; I call this category silence. The cateogries of mediums, together with the source and target of communication and move types are shown in Table 1 in the form of a substitution table so that you can begin to see the framework within which I describe the communications I observe and ask others to observe.

(Insert Table 1 Three characteristics of communication here.)

Table 1 Three characteristics of communication

1. Who/what communicates with whom?*	2. What is the pedagogical purpose of the communication?	3. What mediums are used to communicate content?**
Source & Target	Move type	Medium
teacher	to structure	linguistic
	to solicit	non-linguistic
student (s&c)	to respond	
		para-linguistic
other	to react	silence

*See Appendix 1 for subcategories of source and target.

*See Appendix 2 for subcategories of mediums.

(s=individual student
g=group of students
c=class)

Now it is conceivable, you see, that in teacher preparation, just at a very global level, the teacher can, by focusing on the mediums used in student responses, see that, say, speech is the only medium being used. Because the coding instrument shows both what the mediums are that are used in a particular series of communications as well as those that are not used, alternatives are built into the system. If I find a teacher consistently reacts by saying, for example, "very good", I simply point to linguistic in Column 3 and say, "You have been reacting with this type of medium each day. Tomorrow, communicate your reactions with a paralinguistic medium instead." As the two mediums are contrasted, the teacher can both begin to deliberately alter them in class and begin to see what consequences seem to follow each alternative. Over time, the teacher can substitute non-linguistic mediums such as say pointing to a green sheet of paper after correct responses and a red sheet of paper after incorrect responses. Finally, the teacher can react by doing nothing, which would be coded silence. As the major categories of mediums are distinguished, the sub-categories of course can be used. As the note on Table 1 indicates, the sub-categories of the mediums, with examples, are shown in Appendix 2.

Perhaps at this point, you are bothered by the absence of any judgments in the suggestions that alternatives be used. Well, as I said before, I think the most central step in changing teaching is for those involved to see what occurs. Noting the mediums in general terms at first and then in detail does in fact over time provide teachers with a means to see the relative values of different mediums for different needs. But before the relative values of different mediums can be seen, they all have to be used. And they have to be used in a great range of ways. Ultimately, the teaching act is performed in a series of split second decisions. Most of these are normally quite unconscious. By deliberate manipulation of the mediums, and

other characteristics of communications as well, it is possible to gain more and more conscious control over many of our split second decisions during the act of teaching because deliberate use of alternatives prevents us from acting in our normal ways and thus allows us to first see and later break out of some of the invisible rules that control much of what we do.

Uses of mediums

The next thing I look at is how the mediums are used, the fourth characteristic. I ask the question, "How are the mediums used?" The first major distinction between different uses of mediums I make easily by simply noting whether the mediums are taken in or produced. In silent reading, tasting, touching, smelling and looking at pictures mediums are simply attended to, not produced. When we engage in these receptive activities I say we are a-ing it. By classifying the taking in of all mediums in the same category, I hope to highlight the fact that some of the predictions we need to make when a-ing a linguistic medium such as print might be similar in some ways to the predictions we make when we look at pictures, listen to music or read the expressions on people's faces. Obviously, seeing the word smoke, looking at smoke and smelling smoke require some different mental processes. We can recognize smoke, yet not be able to read the word in a language we do not know, for example, But equally obvious is the fact that each activity requires taking something in. What makes the difference is which medium we in fact take in. By classifying the taking in of all mediums in the same category, I want to highlight the similarities and differences between different types of a-ing and at the same time further highlight the fact that the mediums in Column 3 can combine with any of the uses in Column 4 just as the words in each column in a substitution table can combine with words in adjacent columns.

For the productive activities, I make use of Searle, though when I originally developed the categories I had not yet read him. (Searle 1969) While reading Speech Acts I was excited to find that his categorization of different kinds of talk loosely matched my categories. First, Searles says you can talk. For instance, saying "This is a piece of chalk" is one example of talking. I call this p-ing it. Then, you can characterize talk; you can say "Chalk is a noun" for example, or "Is is a copulative verb." I call this c-ing it. Then, you can also explain talk; that is, make a generalization or a rule about talk. You can say, for example, "all copulative verbs have certain characteristics and one of them is that they have more than two forms." That's a generalization about copulative verbs or another kind of rule. I call this r-ing it. R-ing it essentially requires a combination of a lot of c-ing and a lot of p-ing it. One looks at many characteristics of things and many things and then one is ready to make a generalization about the examples and their characteristics.

The other way we produce, both in language classes, shop classes and subject matter classes, as well as outside of classes, is by re-ing it. Searle does not speak of this use of mediums. One example of re-ing it is copying. Another one is repeating what another has said or done, or imitating what another has done. You can re it in speech, with gestures or actions or any other medium. To cite one example of the results of lack of attention to re-ing it with gestures I will share my experience with Americans who learn Japanese. I can often tell whether a person's teacher was a man or a woman by the way the person bows. Japanese women bow with their hands crossed in front of them while men bow with their hands at their sides. Many non-Japanese imitate not only their teachers' speech but also their gestures, even though the teacher may not ask them to imitate their gestures. When I see American men bow like Japanese women I usually find after talking with them that indeed they did have female teachers.

One can even re silence. In fact, one alternative to telling a class in a loud voice to be quiet is to stand totally still, say nothing and just wait. Some students imitate the silence they meet in these settings in the same way that those who go to a concert imitate the silence they find in members of the audience who got there earlier.

Finally, mediums can be used to s content. In a solicit such as "Repeat this: I'm hungry as a lion" the sentence referred to by this, I'd say is s-ing it. S-ing it is communicating models or other items that are referred to by words such as this, that, it and one. In some conversations, referents are never named. You've no doubt felt confused after getting into a conversation that has been going on sometime simply because you did not know what was being referred to. In these examples, the underlined examples all refer to items I'd say were s-ing it: "This sure didn't fit well; Did you fix 'em up?; Wonder how old they were?"

In Table 2 Four characteristics of communication, I've added the six ways mediums can be used in Column 4. As you can see, the categories are arranged in alphabetical order; they are not listed hierarchically. You can also see, I have used words to stand for the abbreviations I just introduced: a-ing equals attend, c-ing equals characterize, p-ing equals present, r-ing equals relate, re-ing equals re-present and s-ing equals set.

By simply looking at the use, as well as the medium, source or purpose, one is provided with alternatives. And, with the same categories, one can describe communications outside a classroom or teaching setting that on the surface may seem quite different but with the categories becomes simply a rearrangement of the same basic elements.

(Insert Table 2 Four characteristics of communication here.)

Table 2 Four characteristics of communication

1. Who/what communicates with whom?	2. What is the pedagogical purpose of the communication?*	3. What mediums are used to communicate content?	4. How are the mediums used to communicate content?*
Source & Target	Move Type	Medium	Use
teacher	structure	linguistic	attend
			characterize
	solicit	non-linguistic	present
student (sgc)			
	respond	para-linguistic	relate
			represent
	react	silence	
other			set

*The subcategories of the uses are listed in Appendix J.

(s=individual student
g=group of students
c=class)

Looking at the mediums in Column 3 and the uses in Column 4 in different moves can not only point out characteristics of communications we often fail to notice, but also can show relationships between communications that on the surface seem to have nothing to do with each other. In classrooms, one reaction to a student response is to repeat what the student says with rising intonation. For example, if a student says "I am go home" a teacher is likely to say "I am go home?" with rising intonation. The words--a linguistic medium--are used to re one message. But the intonation--a para-linguistic medium--is used to p a separate message. When I order ice-cream, the person behind the counter often repeats my order with rising intonation much as a teacher repeats a student response, both when it is correct and incorrect. The exchange might go like this:

Customer: Two vanilla, one chocolate.

Clerk: Two vanilla, two chocolate?

Customer: Hum.

When the wrong number of cones or the wrong flavors are handed over, the customer sees what he was asked about earlier. Often, no difference is heard between the words used in the order and in the repetition of the order. But when the cones come--in my system a non-linguistic medium--then the difference is discovered. Well, might it be that it is more likely in general that differences between messages are more likely noticed when visual mediums are used rather than simply spoken words or rising intonation? Might written words on the blackboard make it more likely that a difference will be noticed in a classroom just as ice cream cones are more likely to be noticed outside of a class than simply words appealing only to the ears? Do appeals to more than one sense or a different sense have a different impact?

Let me take another common communication that can be described using the mediums and uses in combination in a way that is likely to make teachers see more clearly what they are doing. When saying a pair of words, phrases or any units, one normal pattern is to use rising intonation after the first sample and fall-

ing after the second. For example, it is likely that most people say "Are these the same or different--beach (rising intonation) beach (falling intonation)?" Well, to the student who listens well, they are different in intonation and the same in pronunciation and spelling. I would code the communications this way:

t to s	sol			
		la	set	beach
		la	set	beach
		pa	set	rising intonation
		pa*	set	falling intonation

The la equals linguistic aural--the words said. The pa equals para-linguistic aural, the rising and falling intonation, which in this case communicates a separate message. The asterisk next to the second pa indicates that the message is in contrast to the previous one but in every other way is the same.

Realizing that we use many mediums as well as words to communicate is a truism. The mediums and uses can be used to translate this truism into precise descriptive language. To say two words or phrases with falling intonation takes deliberate effort since it is necessary to break the normal rule we follow in presenting contrasting pairs of anything. Specific attention to the mediums and uses can both help reveal rules we follow and can also be used to provide alternatives to anyone interested in substituting different mediums and using them in different ways.

The mediums and uses can be used to vary the messages in any type of move and communicated by any source. If students are consistently responding only with speech and if they are using speech only to present content, one alternative is to have them characterize in their responses. Rather than giving answers to questions such as "Use plumber in a sentence" they can be asked a series of questions that require nothing but a yes or no about a vocabulary item being taught. For example, the teacher, or another student, can state a fact such as "these people work with water." The students are required to respond with either a yes or a no. Such a response requires no knowledge of grammar because one does not have to form a sentence. Responses such as "he work the water" are thus avoided as are tangents in which such errors of grammar are treated to such a degree that the lexical information about the word in question is forgotten.

If a series of questions are asked--"these people use planes, these people repair sinks, these people repair phones"--students can begin to see characteristics of plumbers and at the same time receive practice in making judgments about information, an activity that many believe is crucial in understanding anything. But aside from the argument that such a series of tasks may aid people to make predictions, the more important point is simply that if ninety percent of student responses require the use present, one obvious alternative is to require more responses that require the use characterize. In the same way, if all responses require only speech--a linguistic aural medium, one obvious alternative is print--a linguistic visual medium. Another is non-linguistic visual: pictures, objects or graphs. Obviously, asking a student to draw a plumber or act the way a plumber would with a broken pipe are not original suggestions. What is slightly original is to show how these different tasks can on one level be considered simply different combinations of four mediums and six uses.

Content communicated

The last characteristic I code is the content communicated by the mediums used in different ways. To keep matters simple, I use only three major categories of content: life, procedure and study. Formulas of greeting and other types of ritual language, personal feelings or information and general knowledge I classify life. Any matters of administration, law, bureaucracy and directions I classify procedure. Communicating a topic of instruction, whether language, other academic subjects, hobbies or skills, I classify study. Life and study can be likened to Dewey's experience and education or Barnes' world knowledge and school knowledge. (Dewey 1938; Barnes 1976)

Dickens' description of a class in Gradgrind's school in Hard Times illustrates both the separate categories and the tension between them in any teaching setting. Try coding the content of the messages in the moves in Excerpt 3 Facts. Use l for life, p for procedure and s for study. Compare your coding with mine, printed below the excerpt.

Excerpt 3 Facts

Setting A large, stone-walled classroom with desks in rows and a very high ceiling. Mr. Gradgrind, the master teacher, is present along with another teacher. Sissey Jupe, the student being asked about horses, has been described earlier. She lives in a room with wallpaper decorated with horses. Her father raises horses, or trains them at least, and so she rides them frequently, feeds them and cleans up after them. She has had extensive experience with horses!

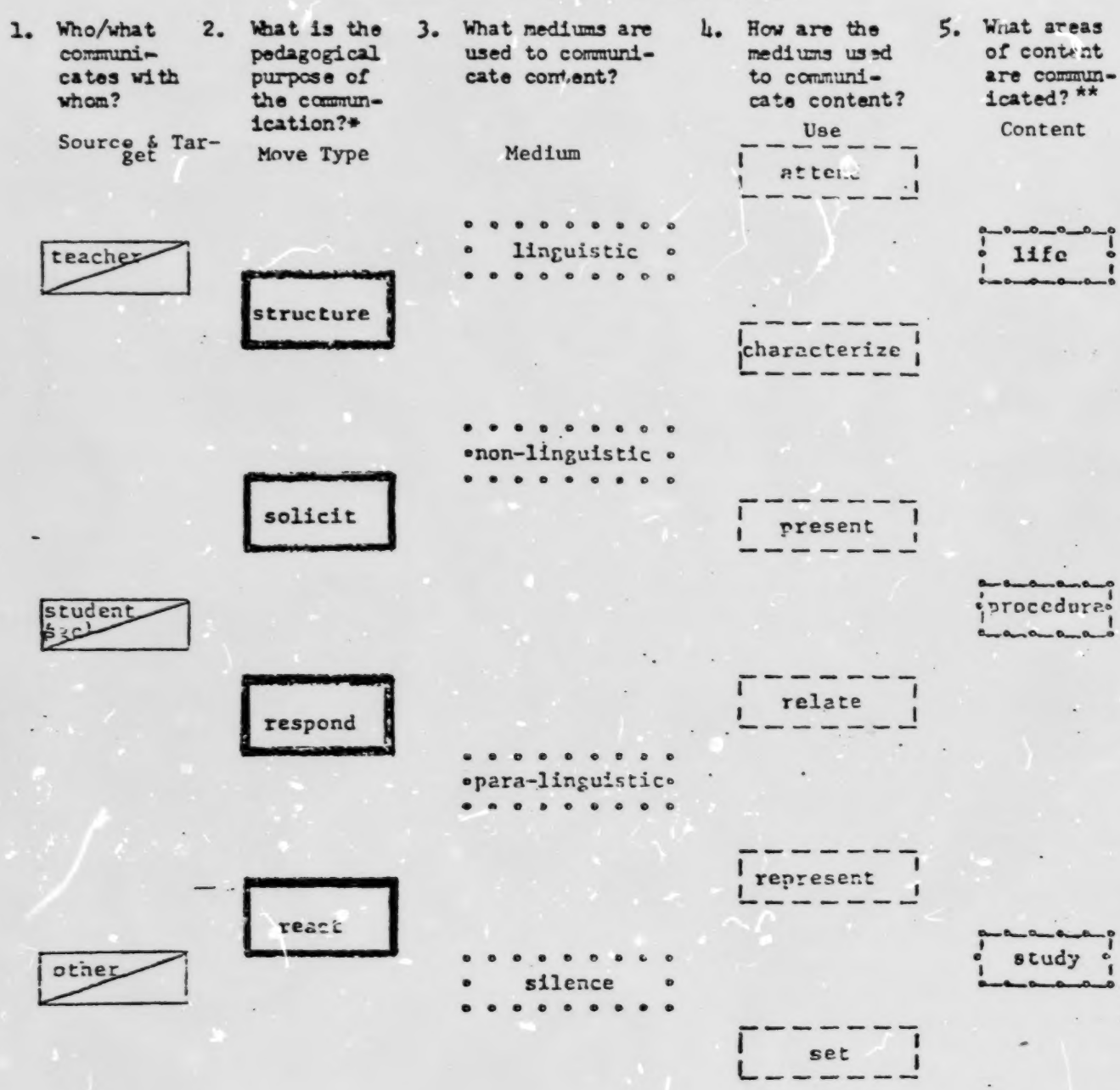
				Content
1.	Now, what I want is, facts. Facts alone are wanted in life.	t to students	str	____
2.	Girl number twenty--who is that girl?	t to students	sol	____
3.	Sissy Jupe, sir.	s to teacher	res	____
4.	Sissy is not a name.	t to student	rea	____
5.	It's father as calls me Sissy, sir.	s to teacher	rea	____
6.	Then he has no business to do it.	t to student	rea	____
7.	What is your father?	t to student	sol	____
8.	He belongs to the horse riding, if you please sir.	s to teacher	res	____
9.	We don't want to know anything about that here.	t to student	rea	____
10.	. . .Give me your definition of a horse.	t to student	sol	____
11.	(Sissy Jupe thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand.)	s to teacher	rea	____
12.	Girl number twenty unable to define a horse. Girl number twenty possessed of no facts in reference to one of the commonest of animals!	t to student	rea	____
13.	Some boy's definition of a horse?	t to students	sol	____
14.	Quadraped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth.	s to teacher	res	____
15.	Now, girl number twenty, you know what a horse is.	t to student	rea	____

Key: 1. procedure; 2. procedure; 3. procedure; 4. study; 5. life; 6. procedure; 7. life; 8. life; 9. procedure; 10. study; 11. life; 12. procedure; 13. study; 14. study; 15. procedure.

Table 4 Five characteristics of communication contains the major categories of each of the five characteristics I describe. 19

(Insert Table 4 Five characteristics of communication here.)

Table 4 Five characteristics of communication*



*To describe communications at a larger level, a zero column can be added to the left of Column 1. This could be used, say, to code the functions or sequences of moves. We might say the first group of six moves is depersonalized, for example. And the set of the next twenty moves is simply to give information. The next fifteen moves might have the function of establishing control over the class. So we are not limited to the five columns.

We can add features of communications to further distinguish items that are obviously different but coded the same way. The features can be added to a sixth column, to the right of Column 5. In addition to showing that some messages are in the target language and some in the native language, communications that are incorrect can be noted. Those that seem to be jokes can too, as can other features that distinguish messages that are obviously different from each other.

**The subcategories of these areas of content are listed in Appendix 4.

Further considerations

There are times, either when doing research or when critiquing lessons as part of a program of teacher preparation, when two communications are obviously different in some way, yet the major categories in Table 4 do not reveal any differences and the differences are beyond those obvious ones such as target language or native language and other differences noted as features of the communications. In these cases, the subcategories in Appendix 1, 2, 3 and 4 can be used. When the subcategories are used, of course, people begin to say the system is complex. But the major method that I use in developing the subcategories is simply to say "Are these two communications the same or different in a particular way?" If you forget the subcategories, and even if you forget the major categories, I think the critical thing that my observation scheme reminds us of is simply that in all of our work the task is simply to classify communications that seem to be the same or different from each other in some way.

The advantage from my point of view to a multidimensional coding system such as mine, rather than a unidimensional one such as Flanders' system is that you can generate so many more differences. You see, even with just the major categories, if you just multiply 3 sources--teacher, student and other, or material--times 4 move types you get 12 possible combinations. And then 12 possible combinations times the 4 major categories of mediums is 48. Then, 48 times 6 uses in Column 4 provides a great number of differences that you can show very easily with just the major categories. (Flanders 1963)

Some applications

Tallying

With Table 4, we can describe from one to five characteristics of any communication. Without a tape or transcript, it is not possible to describe all five characteristics. But it is possible to code one or two characteristics live. For example, if you want to see what content students are communicating in responses and reactions, you simply need to make two columns, one headed response and the other reaction. Under each, write an l for life, a p for procedure and an s for study each time a student responds or reacts. Tallying these three characteristics live provides a quick index of what areas of content are most frequent in reflexive student communications. Are the frequencies similar across all levels taught by the same teacher? Do reading classes contain more life? Are the proportions different according to the level of the classes? What differences are there between classes set up with different aims that use different books and syllabuses? These are just a few of the questions that a tally of content could help answer.

Of course, a tally is just the first step. And again, a high frequency in one category is not better than a high frequency in another. For example, if you bring drinks to a classroom with older people, they'll most likely communicate life a great deal, especially if the teacher sits in the back of the class. As you code, you will begin to see that some communications are hard to fit in either category because they contain attributes of more than one category. You will begin to see that areas of content are sometimes integrated, and then see the types of activities that produced the communications of this type. Activities that produced responses and reactions that at the same time communicated genuine information and contained patterns of language that were being introduced can be noted. Thus, tallying categories can lead to the generation of alternatives in still another way--through the substitution of activities that consistently produce communications that contain either different proportions of say areas of content or contain the integration of two areas of content.

Manipulating messages

While tallying is possible for noting some characteristics of communication, transcribing communications or re-listening to them on tapes may be necessary for noting all five characteristics. Once communications are transcribed and coded the categories can be used to manipulate the original communication just as words in substitution tables can be used to manipulate a basic sentence. Let's say that you were interested in structuring moves, for example. One pattern you might find is this: teacher structures with a linguistic aural medium used to present procedure. An example of this could be "Today, we're going to have a test." Now, by definition, one aspect of structuring is to give directions since structuring moves prepare for subsequent behavior. Knowing this, it is hard to imagine that, say life, or study could be substituted for procedure. But another alternative to substitution is addition. Stating what the test was to be about would add study as in "Today, we're going to have a test on films." One way to add life as well would be to add still another statement: "Today, we're going to have a test on films—I know how much you hate tests and like films; I prefer films to tests too." If the structuring moves that were transcribed already contained a great number of messages, similar to the one I just presented with all three categories of content in it, then, the obvious alternative would be to subtract messages rather than to add them. But whether you add, subtract, substitute or integrate and combine categories, the major purpose in the first instance is simply to describe what is. Unless we do that, we do not what rules we are following, and, as a result are unlikely to change.

Observing outside the classroom

If coding the five characteristics of communications in teaching settings does not suggest variations, or if one grows tired of tallying and manipulating communications only in teaching settings, another tack is to collect and code communications—structuring moves for example—in non-teaching settings. Masters of ceremonies on game shows on television, at concerts and at many other public performances

structure. Noting the characteristics of these moves will suggest alternatives for teaching settings. And at the same time, clearer, more precise differences and similarities between teaching and non-teaching settings will emerge. The usual practice of describing communications only in classrooms, I think, ignores the usefulness of contrast in all learning.

Conclusion

I'd like to conclude with an example of the application of my system that shows how the system can aid in revealing relationships between communications in different settings that a surface description may not reveal. The example is from the area of feedback. If you were to drop me in a parachute almost anyplace in the world, and I observed someone trying to open a door in an unfamiliar place and the person pulled a door that needed to be pushed, nine times out of ten another person would either say "push" or would push the door for the stranger. What happens in the classroom? I think we follow a similar rule. When a student makes a mistake, what do we tend to do, nine times out of ten? Well, usually, we give the answer. We sometimes indicate "no" which is less necessary in the case of an unopening door since the lack of movement is a kind of "no". So, in my system, both inside and outside of the classroom, a <u>set</u> communicated by the teacher is very likely after an error. To tell teachers in a critique to do something else when in fact the treatment of some errors in a particular way seems to be a rule that most of us seem to follow both inside and outside classrooms is unlikely to have any long lasting effect. This rule, like many we all follow, is probably very deeply ingrained. Even some who think they have a different philosophy and believe that giving an answer is not good, often do, because feedback, like most of teaching, is not always conscious and deliberate. By coding communications and deliberately substituting alternatives we are more likely to become conscious of what we do and so better able to alter and control what we do.

One might ask "Why is the extra step needed to translate comments into this language?" Or, one might ask "Why not just look at communications precisely?" "Why ask teachers to use the terms in Table 4 rather than their own terms?" Well, the terms in the table provide a conceptualization which can help reveal relationships that may otherwise remain obscure. And in placing communications in categories, one becomes so involved in the process of classifying that it becomes difficult to make judgments at the same time. Furthermore, if suggestions are not placed in a framework they are likely to be forgotten. But most critical is my belief that deliberate control and added variety, and thus real change, can come only when teachers themselves describe their own and other's communications in a range of settings precisely and non-judgmentally and substitute alternative communications that at once break the rules we are controlled by and reveal the rules that control us.

Said another way, what I am advocating is simply a process similar to one that has made responses possible to the question in the title, "What kind of a flower is that?". As a botanist uses a framework to classify flowers, so I am advocating a framework to classify communications. In classifying flowers, precise, non-judgmental descriptions of multiple characteristics are required just as I think such descriptions are useful in critiquing. Botanical taxonomies put flowers that on the surface seem different together--strawberries and roses in the same family, for example. And my framework does the same thing with communications. Finally, new varieties of flowers come about by understanding the characteristics of the flowers and the rules they follow in their life cycles. Control of flowers--keeping weeds under control or making sure some flowers produce desired crops is possible only after the rules they follow are discovered.

The disadvantage of the question "What kind of a flower is that?" is that it implies that the main aim is to come up with a name or label. Because of the emphasis on the categories or labels both in much classroom observation work and in botany, the ability to learn names and labels and apply them is all too often considered the central aim. But both in critiques and in botanical work the central aim is the process

of classification and the use we put the results of our classification to. The process of discovery, not the discovery itself, is the central aim. Paradoxically, the learning of the terms has to be emphasized in order for the relationships they show, the rules they imply and the alternatives they suggest, to be revealed. But when the importance of the process rather than the mastery of the labels and names is not emphasized, too many get bogged down in naming, even for its own sake. Should you be interested in more information and exercises on some of the topics I have just briefly described in this presentation, I have provided an annotated list of materials available for more work with the observation system in the bibliography. Working through some of these materials will make the terms second nature to you so that you will not only be able to "name flowers" but also free and able to relish the process of seeing them differently, developing new varieties and generating different arrangements of those with which you are already familiar.*

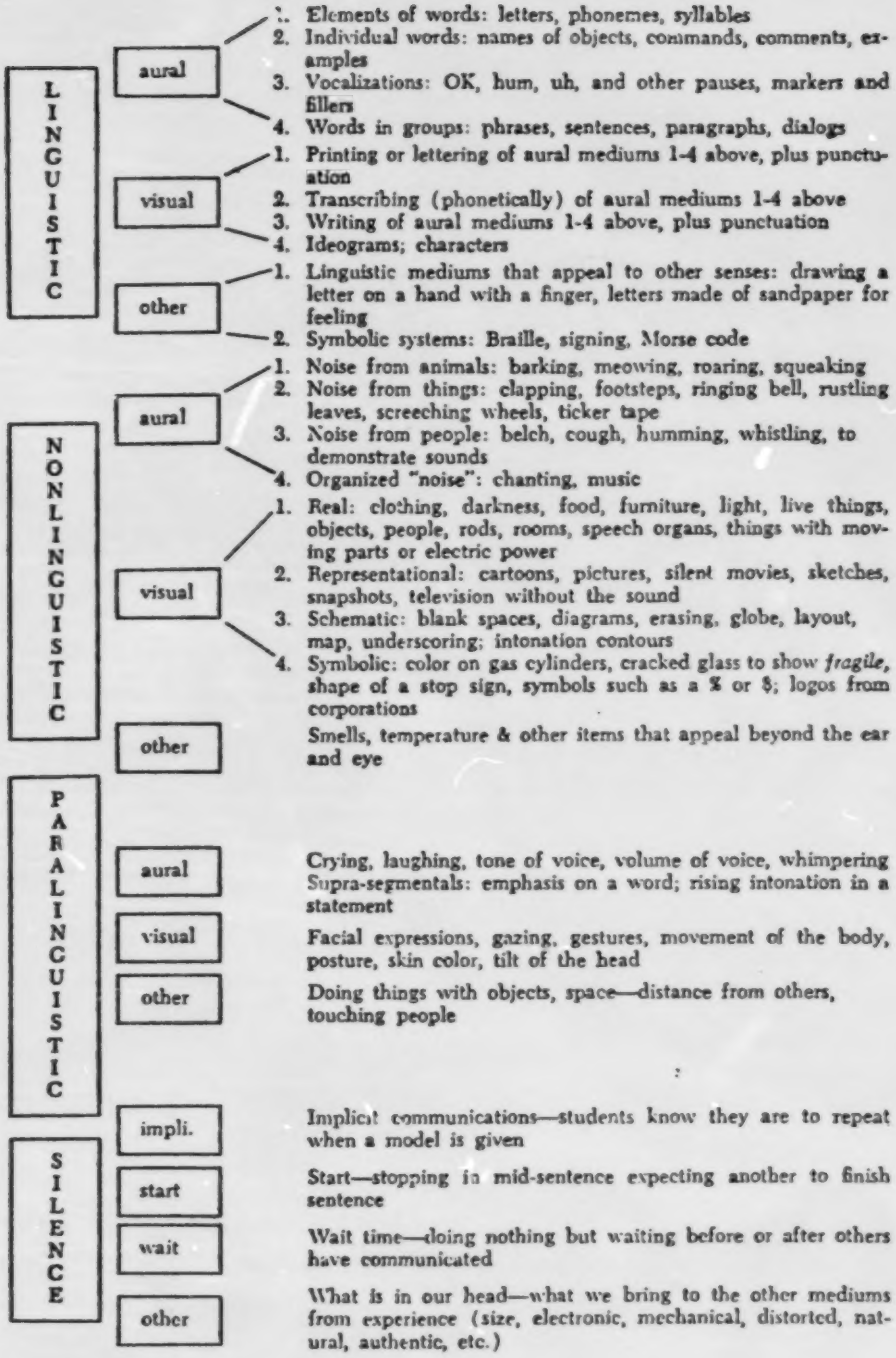
*One thing we could all do to make it easier for us all to understand each others' systems better would be to establish a clearing house through which we could exchange tapes, transcripts and coded protocals we have each collected and developed. We each spend a lot of time collecting and transcribing more and more tapes of classes and other examples of communications in other settings. If we all used each others' we could save time transcribing, obtain wider samples and compare descriptions of the same data based on the use of different instruments. Perhaps the British Council or the Goethe Institute could serve as such a clearing house, or else the institution of one of the participants in this meeting. I would be willing to explore the possibility of developing such a clearing house at my own institution if others would consider it convenient and useful and neither of the sponsoring institutions of this meeting were able to develop a clearing house.

Appendix 1 Subcategories of source and target

teacher	--person in charge of a class --person who assumes the role of teacher by taking over --an informant used by a teacher to aid instruction --a visitor used by the teacher to aid instruction --paid aide in a class
student	--individual student clearly identified because of being in a class --person in any setting who is trying to learn something or do something and is being helped by another who is not a peer --any person treating another as a peer in any way
group of students	--a part of any class, either formed by common interests or assigned to act in a group by the person in charge --the number of players on the field that are only part of a larger team --a part of a band or any other organization that at times acts independently of the entire organization
entire class	--all the individuals acting or being treated as part of one organization
other	--texts --roads, sidewalks and other structures that provide frameworks for us to communicate in --tools, typewriters, and other objects we use that communicate any kind of content with one of the four purposes --a fire alarm, blinking lights or any other signals that structure, solicit, respond or react and communicate content --pictures, printed messages such as EXIT that communicate content and perform one of the four purposes --tests, examinations

Note: the teacher, student or groups or classes can be male, ferale or mixed; the communications can be transmitted by the sources not only in many mediums but electronically, through an amplification system or just with natural means; alternative means for delivering the moves can be noted if you have an interest in comparing consequences and seeing whether rules change when such features of the sources change.

Appendix 2 Mediums and subcategories


LINGUISTIC
aural
1. Elements of words: letters, phonemes, syllables
2. Individual words: names of objects, commands, comments, examples
3. Vocalizations: OK, hum, uh, and other pauses, markers and fillers
4. Words in groups: phrases, sentences, paragraphs, dialogs
visual
1. Printing or lettering of aural mediums 1-4 above, plus punctuation
2. Transcribing (phonetically) of aural mediums 1-4 above
3. Writing of aural mediums 1-4 above, plus punctuation
4. Ideograms; characters
other
1. Linguistic mediums that appeal to other senses: drawing a letter on a hand with a finger, letters made of sandpaper for feeling
2. Symbolic systems: Braille, signing, Morse code
NONLINGUISTIC
aural
1. Noise from animals: barking, meowing, roaring, squeaking
2. Noise from things: clapping, footsteps, ringing bell, rustling leaves, screeching wheels, ticker tape
3. Noise from people: belch, cough, humming, whistling, to demonstrate sounds
4. Organized "noise": chanting, music
visual
1. Real: clothing, darkness, food, furniture, light, live things, objects, people, rods, rooms, speech organs, things with moving parts or electric power
2. Representational: cartoons, pictures, silent movies, sketches, snapshots, television without the sound
3. Schematic: blank spaces, diagrams, erasing, globe, layout, map, underscoring; intonation contours
4. Symbolic: color on gas cylinders, cracked glass to show *fragile*, shape of a stop sign, symbols such as a % or $; logos from corporations
other
Smells, temperature & other items that appeal beyond the ear and eye
PARALINGUISTIC
aural
Crying, laughing, tone of voice, volume of voice, whimpering
Supra-segmentals: emphasis on a word; rising intonation in a statement
visual
Facial expressions, gazing, gestures, movement of the body, posture, skin color, tilt of the head
other
Doing things with objects, space—distance from others, touching people
SILENCE
impli.
Implicit communications—students know they are to repeat when a model is given
start
Start—stopping in mid-sentence expecting another to finish sentence
wait
Wait time—doing nothing but waiting before or after others have communicated
other
What is in our head—what we bring to the other mediums from experience (size, electronic, mechanical, distorted, natural, authentic, etc.)

"It's too damn tight"--TESOL Quarterly, Vol. XIV, June 1980.

Appendix 3 Uses and subcategories

attend — taking in communications made in any medium
- --listening
- --silent reading
- --smelling
- --tasting
- --touching
- --viewing

characterize — communicating about content or things to distinguish them or set criteria or limit choices
- --differentiate: indicating that communications are the same or different
- --evaluate: prescribing or indicating that communications are true or false, correct or incorrect; responding to yes/no or either/or questions
- --examine: counting or locating parts of words; emphasizing; diagraming sentences
- --illustrate: giving attributes of items; making judgments that are not explicitly good or bad
- --label: naming parts of speech or assigning category names to any groups

present — communicating content itself directly
- --elicit: communicating questions, commands or requests in order to practice content being taught or in order to see whether others know the responses the person soliciting already knows
- --query: communicating questions one does not know the answers to or commanding or requesting in order to seek unanticipated responses
- --state: communicating declarative sentences, responding to questions with words or phrases or giving answers in any way that does not fit in the other categ

relate — communicating in such a way that higher level mental processes are required
- --explain: giving long definitions of words or concepts, making generalizations or developing and stating rules
- --interpret: making inferences, synthesizing

re-present — communicating what another has in the same medium, with or without changes
- --in a different medium
  - --changing mediums by reading orally, doing dictations naming objects or in any other way changing one medium into another
- --in the same medium
  - --combining: putting two small units given by another together
  - --editing: making technical changes in material
  - --expanding: adding words, phrases or other units to phrases or sentences provided by another
  - --imitating: copying, repeating or in any way re-presenting what another has presented with no changes
  - --paraphrasing: restating or rewriting what another has communicated in one's own words but keeping the meaning as close to the original as possible
  - --substituting with or without change: changing words, letters or any other units whether the change requires altering the original pattern or not
  - --transforming: changing the order of letters, words or larger units

set — communicating models, examples, texts or anything that is referred to by words such as that, this, one, it or those

life l

formula	Good morning. So long. Hello. Please.
general knowledge	Truman took long walks. Huck Finn was really clever. Rent control is bad. (factual or fictional--issues or information)
personal	I'm sick. I'm a dentist and have two sisters. I hate rice. (factual or fictional--feelings or information--about life or work)

procedure p

administration	Answer the roll. We're going to have a test. Rules for games.
assign roles	Pretend you are angry. You are the customer and you the clerk.
check	Do you understand? I don't follow. It's not clear. Rising intonation.
class behavior:	
language	Say it louder. I can't see the board.
social	You are making too much noise. Don't throw paper on the floor!
difficulty factor	This is easy. The next exercises are really difficult.
nurturing	You can do it. You're coming along fine.
salute	Ali. . .Maria. . .(Calling the names of students or groups.)
u teaching direction	Repeat. Take this dictation. Tell me what this is. Define it.
teaching rationale	We are doing this exercise because it will lead to clarification.
time/space me.	(Waiting for an answer, a train or a question.) Finish quickly. Come here & other comments about measures of space or time.
transition	OK, Now. . .umm. . .
work	The parts of one's job that require routine and procedural matters.

study s

language	
context	The setting communications occur in; in reading, the title or cover.
culture	When you bow, put your hands by your sides if you are male in Japan. Explicit information about different ethnic or national groups.
dialects	In Florida, they say "Stand in line" and in New York "Stand on line."
discourse	The analysis of conversation--turn taking, use of power, etc.
format	The artistic or graphic design or layout of material, different print, etc.
functions	Use of mediums to interact, seek knowledge, pray, demand, request, etc.
x function words	The, do, is--words in any language that have mainly grammatical meaning.
j genres	Characteristics of poems, short stories, editorials, essays, etc.
inflections	Word endings that signal grammatical meaning, reduced forms, etc.
lexis-literal	That's a book. Plants have leaves--literal word meaning
non-literal	Figurative, historical, humorous, idiomatic, ironic meaning
literature	Characteristics of genres: theme, imagery, plot, etc.
mechanics	Spelling, formation of letters, holding of a pen or pencil
q punctuation	Use of question marks, capital and lower case letters, indentation
register	Usage of different social groups and classes
rhetoric	Organization of passages, logic, sequence, etc.
sound--segmental	Consonants, consonant clusters, syllabification, vowel sounds, etc.
supra-segmental	Intonation, stress and rhythm and tone
sound/letter	Correspondance between sounds and spelling; phonics
speech production	Your tongue should be up. The voice box vibrates. Look at my lips. Lisp.
style	That's florid. Use that word in polite places only. Slang, etc.
b ties-cohesion	Connections between paragraphs and sentences--noting what it refers to.
d collocation	Ties between words: A desert can be arid but not your throat.
word order	Different meanings of "Fire help" depending on slot each word fills.
unclassified	When many subcategories are used or when one can't be determined.
other	
academic areas	school subjects other than language such as biology, history, etc.
special areas	Art, crafts, hobbies, music, sports and other things that require language
teaching	Studying actual transcripts or tapes of teaching, not only advice.
unspecified	When the area of content is difficult for many observers to agree on.
use	When one of the uses in Column 4 is the content as when giving examples or when re-presenting uses other than sets.

Material referred to in the presentation

Barnes, Douglas. 1976. From communication to curriculum. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin.

Bellack et al. 1966. The language of the classroom. New York: Teachers College Press.

Cogan, Morris L. 1973. Clinical Supervision. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Dewey, John. 1963. Experience and education. New York: Collier-Macmillan. (Originally published in 1938)

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Flanders, N.E. 1963. "Intent, Action and Feedback: A Preparation for Teaching" in Interaction analysis: Theory, research and application. edited by E.J. Amidon and J.B. Hough. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Searle, John. 1969. Speech acts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Material that contains further information on the observation system and its application

Fanselow, John F. 1977. "Beyond Rashomon--Conceptualizing and Describing the Teaching Act." TESOL Quarterly, Vol. XI, March.

Contains the rationale for an observation system and provides definitions and examples of the categories.

Fanselow, John F. 1977. "An Approach to CBTE in Second Language Teaching." In Bilingual, ESOL and Foreign Language Teacher Preparation: Models, Practices, Issues, edited by John F. Fanselow and Richard L. Light. Washington, D.C.: TESOL.

Contains a description of behaviors that certain learning principles and personal assumptions imply, described in everyday language but developed using the framework of the observation system described in the presentation you just read.

Fanselow, John F. 1977. "The Treatment of Error in Oral Work." Foreign Language Annals, Vol. IX, October.

Contains a description of how teachers actually do correct errors and a series of alternatives. Though written without any of the terms from the observation system you just read about, the description and the presentation of alternatives were both done using the conceptualization of the observation system.

Fanselow, John F. 1978. "Breaking the rules of the classroom game through self-analysis" in Teaching English as a second language: Themes, Practices, Viewpoints. New York: New York State English to Speakers of Other Languages Bilingual Educator's Association. ERIC ED 145 720

Provides practice in learning the purposes of communication--structuring, soliciting, responding and reacting and contains suggestions for altering the source and target of each move types so that the usual pattern of teacher structure, solicit and react can be altered and new rules followed.

Material that contains further information on the observation system and its application

Fanselow, John F. 1978. "I can't, I'm Talking with the Lady"--Feedback in Teaching and Non-teaching Settings. MEXTESOL Journal, Vol. II No. 4. Autumn. ERIC ED 155 926

Shows how the observation system can be used to describe feedback and generate alternative ways of providing feedback. Describes and codes examples of feedback in teaching and non-teaching settings.

Fanselow, John F. 1980. "It's too damn tight"--TESOL Quarterly, Vol. XIV, June.

Shows how the mediums in the observation system you just read about can be used to highlight differences between language communicated in teaching and non-teaching settings. The aim of the article is to discuss some aspects of English for specific purposes, and to reach this aim, the importance of different mediums is highlighted.

Fanselow, John F. 1982. "I'd like to Ask You a Couple of Questions"--Investigating Questions in a Range of Settings. In Michael Long and Herb Seliger. Classroom Language Acquisition and Use: New Perspectives. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.

Shows how the observation system described in general terms in this presentation can be applied to the description of solicits--questions, commands and requests that require responses. From the descriptions, ways of generating alternatives are presented. Coding exercises are provided for the reader.

Fanselow, John F. 1983. Breaking rules--alternatives for language teachers. New York: Longman.

A methods book based on FOCUS which provides suggestions for altering behavior for those that are busy, exercises for coding for those with more time and observation guides and suggestions for generating alternatives for those with loads of time. Transcripts of communications from both teaching and non-teaching settings are used to illustrate categories of the observation system and rules that we follow unconsciously.